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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Thirty-second session
Vienna, 6-17 February 1995

REPORT OF THE AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES
(United Nations Office at Vienna, 3-5 October 1994)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna, from 3 to 5 October 1994. V. Kojarnovitch of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was elected Chairman. The list of participants is attached to the present report as annex I.

2. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Giorgio Giacomelli, opened the Meeting and welcomed the participants. He noted that space activities had assumed a higher profile within the United Nations system in the past few years as a result, in part, of the realization, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his 1992 report on "International Cooperation in Space Activities for Enhancing Security in the Post-Cold War Era", that space technology and its applications could be effectively utilized by the international community to promote security in all its forms - political, military, economic and environmental. He noted that with the experience and knowledge of each of the organizations in the field of its competence, the United Nations system as a whole had the potential to make a significant contribution to various aspects of economic and social development through the use of space technology. He further noted that as the space-related activities of the many different parts of the United Nations system multiplied, and as financial constraints increased, there was a clear need to ensure that all organizations and agencies cooperated and coordinated their activities so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. In that context, the importance of the Meeting should be firmly recognized and emphasized by each organization of the United Nations system, he concluded.

3. The Meeting adopted the agenda contained in annex II of the present report.

I. SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING

A. Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and review of preparations for UNISPACE - III (agenda item 4)

B. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical applications of space technology and related areas (agenda item 6)

1. Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the actual activities of United Nations organizations in the area of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes (agenda item 6 (a))

4. It was decided to consider agenda items 4 and 6 (a) above together.

5. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations and the Expert on Space Applications informed the Meeting of the progress made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees in implementing the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) and of other matters of inter-agency interest.

6. The Meeting noted the progress made through the United Nations Space Applications Programme on the establishment of proposed regional space science and technology education centres in the regions of

Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Asia, and further noted that negotiations were under way with the Governments concerned in those regions toward the establishment of the centres. The Meeting recognized the value of the concept of the above-mentioned regional centres, and several participants expressed their wish to participate in the programmes and offered to share their experience in the establishment of similar centres in areas of their competence. Several representatives offered to assist in the development of the curriculum for the centres, and made substantive comments in that regard. It was suggested that the concerns of other organizations in the United Nations system relating to educational and training aspects should be fully taken into account in the development of the future work programmes of the centres.

7. The representatives of the organizations reported on their current activities and plans for 1995, 1996 and future years. They noted that they were continuing to implement the relevant recommendations of UNISPACE 82 (A/CONF.101/10), mostly as part of ongoing programmes. In that respect, an exchange of views followed regarding how best to coordinate future activities. The Meeting concluded that efforts should continue to be focused on the identification of areas where interests of different agencies coincided and coordinated actions could be established.

8. The representatives also noted with appreciation the strong emphasis placed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/39 of 10 December 1993, and by the Committee on the importance of cooperation within the United Nations system, and agreed to keep the Committee informed of the progress made in their activities.

9. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the presentations made by the representatives at the Meeting on their activities, including new activities in the fields of navigation and spin-offs. Recognizing the usefulness of the detailed presentations made during the Meeting, the participants agreed that it would be useful to invite the International Civil Aviation Organization and UNIDO to make similar presentations, on communications, navigation and surveillance and air traffic management systems and on spin-off benefits of space technology at the next session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

10. The participants noted the importance of continued cooperation and coordination among the organizations represented at the Meeting to ensure that their mutual interests would be secured. The Meeting also agreed that through the inter-agency process, ways and means should be found to advance the views of each organization before the conferences of other organizations. In that connection, it was observed that each organization should continue the useful practice of apprising its member States of the important issues that should be followed up by those States in other forums.

2. Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programmes of work of United Nations organizations (agenda item 6 (b))

11. The Meeting had before it the draft annual report of the Secretary-General entitled "Coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, programmes of work for 1995, 1996 and future years". That was the twentieth report to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in which information from organizations within the United Nations system was presented in an integrated form, outlining planned activities by field of applications.

12. The participants noted that, in accordance with the agreement reached during its annual session in 1984 (ACC/1984/PG/8, para. 13), the draft report currently consisted of two major sections, one containing a summary of major planned activities and programmes, without reference to the organizations concerned, and

the other containing a description of the future programmes of the individual organizations concerned, as in past reports.

13. The draft report contained information on activities and programmes involving the applications of space technology in the fields of remote sensing and the Geographic Information System (GIS), communications, meteorology and hydrology, basic space science and other related fields. It highlighted activities carried out jointly by the organizations concerned through cooperative programmes, as well as those carried out separately within their areas of competence. Those activities included, for the above-mentioned fields: assistance in education and training through training courses, workshops, seminars and fellowships; expert services and survey missions to the countries concerned and conduct of studies on pilot projects or implementation of projects with operational applications of technology; and dissemination or exchange of information on the status of technology or operational systems. The participants noted that the planned activities reflected part of the efforts of organizations to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

14. The draft report was discussed in detail, and a number of suggestions and comments were made, including the suggestion to have a new heading entitled, "Safety aspects". The Meeting also agreed to amend the heading "Communications" to read, "Communications and navigation", to better accommodate activities currently under way in the navigation field, such as the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). The suggestions and comments were to be incorporated in the final text, to be submitted by the Secretary-General (A/AC.105/587) to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-second session, to be held in 1995.

C. Implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 (agenda item 5)

D. In-depth review of the cooperation of United Nations organizations in remote sensing and related GIS activities: remote sensing data policy for requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system (agenda item 7)

15. Agenda items 5 and 7 were considered together.

16. The Meeting had before it a document (A/AC.105/547/Add.1) containing updated information on the implementation by the United Nations system of Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.[1] The document was provided by the secretariat to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-first session, pursuant to the request of the Committee. The Meeting noted that the document was well received by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and by the Committee.

17. As agreed at its previous session, the Meeting initiated its consideration of the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 on sustainable development in developing countries and the current programmes sponsored by organizations of the United Nations system, as a separate agenda item. The Meeting noted that it had been agreed at the previous session that the existing conditions under which environmental data obtained by remote sensing satellites were provided to programmes sponsored by the organizations of the United Nations system should be maintained.

18. In its consideration of the matter, the Meeting addressed a number of issues, including a brief evaluation of activities supported by the United Nations system in the developing countries. It focused on what the emphasis of such support should be in the future. Issues addressed in that context included: conferences, workshops and seminars on the applications of new and advanced systems; training and education programmes; institution-building; project formulation and execution; exchange of information; and other areas of inter-agency cooperation.

19. In that regard, the Meeting noted that there were many areas that needed close attention, and discussed in detail the new policy adopted by the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT). With respect to access to high-resolution imaging data, the participants noted the intention of EUMETSAT to charge a fee for access as of 1 April 1995. The Meeting recognized that that was the first time that such fees would be charged, and that it would be a deviation from normal practice, with many potential impacts on various programmes of the United Nations system. In view of the above, the Meeting recommended that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee might wish to consider the implications of the matter and make its views known to EUMETSAT. The Meeting agreed that the concerned organizations of the United Nations system should pursue the matter through the heads of those organizations.

20. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the Government of Japan, in connection with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (General Assembly resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989), had organized the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction from 23 to 27 May 1994 at Yokohama. It commended the excellent work done at the Conference.

21. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Development in Asia and the Pacific Region and its Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials were organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and hosted by the Government of China, from 19 to 24 September 1994, at Beijing. It commended the excellent work by ESCAP in organizing the Conference, and noted with great interest the Beijing Declaration on Space Technology Applications for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific adopted by the Conference, as well as the Strategy for Regional Cooperation in Space Applications for Sustainable Development and the Action Plan on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific endorsed by the Conference. The Meeting expressed its support for the proposals and recommendations endorsed by the Conference, and agreed that in implementing the Action Plan, the preparatory work for the activities by ESCAP should continue to focus on coordination, taking into account the ongoing work in the region by other organizations.

22. The Meeting also noted that the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) submitted the paper on its proposed Basic Elements Automated Monitoring Satellite (BEAMSAT). The Meeting considered that it might be premature at present for the Meeting to take any formal position on that project, and suggested that ECE might bring the concept of BEAMSAT to the attention of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), taking into account ongoing activities relating to CEOS.

23. The Meeting agreed that the discussions, during the course of its consideration of matters relating to remote sensing, had identified several important points to be discussed at future meetings. It was noted that discussions should continue on those points and other selected issues because, unlike other emerging areas of technology, such as space manufacturing, the benefits of which were not yet apparent as far as developing countries were concerned, remote sensing was definitely an important tool for developing countries.

24. The Meeting took note of the need for further inter-agency consultation on, and coordination of, the activities and programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly in view of the follow-up activities to be undertaken in response to Agenda 21. It also agreed that the in-depth review of the cooperation of organizations of the United Nations system in remote sensing and related GIS activities should be continued at its next session. In that connection, the Meeting agreed that it should continue its consideration of those items at its next session.

25. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had nearly completed its restructuring, and was now able to once again fully resume and strengthen its cooperation with the other organizations of the United Nations system. In that connection, the Meeting also noted with satisfaction the progress made by the FAO-sponsored AFRICOVER project, which had been formulated through the inter-agency meetings. That project was designed to establish a land-cover digital database for competent national and regional African bodies in collaboration with those bodies and the countries concerned, and to produce land cover maps.

E. Coordination of follow-up activities of the organizations of the United Nations system for International Space Year 1992 (agenda item 8)

26. The Meeting noted the recommendation by the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/67 of 14 December 1992, that the United Nations should actively encourage the continuation of activities initiated for International Space Year (ISY) 1992 and promote broader involvement in those activities by more nations. The Meeting noted that several meetings of the Space Agency Forum (SAF), which had been established to follow up activities of ISY 1992, and CEOS were held during the 1993-1994 period, and that many of the organizations of the United Nations system had been accorded affiliate status with those organizations. It noted, in particular, that a project presented to CEOS was being funded by the Deutsche Agentur für Raumfahrtangelegenheiten (DARA) in cooperation with the United Nations. The project consisted in a feasibility study on the establishment of the international space information service as recommended by UNISPACE 82. The organizations participating in the Meeting were invited to assist in carrying out the feasibility study.

27. Considering that the follow-up work of ISY was now being conducted through SAF and CEOS, the Meeting agreed that discussions on the item should be concluded, and that any other related activities should be discussed under other items, in particular those related to remote sensing and GIS activities.

II. UNISPACE - III

28. The Meeting was informed of the preparatory discussions concerning the third UNISPACE conference, and had before it the document prepared by the secretariat on that matter (A/AC.105/575), working papers on the conference (A/AC.105/C.1/L.191, A/AC.105/C.1/L.195 and A/AC.105/C.1/L.199) which had been submitted to the Committee, and an informal paper prepared by the Chairman of the Committee on the results of the discussions of the Committee relating to the agenda of the conference.

29. The Meeting noted the agreement by the Committee that a third UNISPACE conference could be convened in the near future. It also noted the recommendation by the Committee that a very thorough analysis and definition of an agenda for such a conference should take place at the next session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the request by the Committee that the Secretariat should compile a document containing the various ideas regarding the agenda and organization of the conference, in time for consideration at the next session of the Subcommittee.

30. In that connection, the Meeting considered possible contributions to the document to be prepared by the Secretariat, and discussed the role of the organizations of the United Nations system in the proposed conference. It noted that the proposed agenda, as contained in the above-mentioned informal paper, was too technically oriented, whereas such a conference should be more policy-oriented. Following discussions on the matter, and recognizing the differing views of member States, the Meeting agreed that the most pragmatic way to deal with the issue would be to weave the technical items into the fabric of an agenda that focused

on policy. In that connection, offers were made for the submission of amendments to the informal agenda that might be included in the document to be prepared by the Secretariat.

31. With regard to the seminars proposed in the informal paper, the view was expressed that caution should be exercised in organizing such technical meetings in conjunction with the conference. The conference should not become one for technicians without the interaction of policy makers. The view was also expressed that in the formulation of an agenda, the objectives of the conference should be reflected in the technical presentations to be made in the course of the conference. The Meeting also held the view that the agenda of the conference should contain bold and innovative ideas in the area of space activities, through a thorough and careful analysis of contemporary issues of significance to space development and applications, including geopolitical changes.

32. The Meeting agreed that the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, which provided an efficient platform and mechanism for organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to cooperate in promoting the peaceful use of space technologies, could play a role in coordinating inter-agency preparations of the proposed UNISPACE - III.

III. FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK

33. The Meeting reiterated the importance of continuing its sessions on an annual basis, in order to better coordinate activities relating to outer space within the United Nations system. It recalled that various intergovernmental committees, particularly the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, had expressed their concerns about duplication of efforts in the work of various organizations of the United Nations system. In that connection, the Meeting noted that, owing to its work, those concerns had been satisfactorily dealt with and that those committees had positively commented on the work of the Meeting in their recent reports.

34. The Meeting, noting the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee concerning the necessity of ensuring continuous and effective consultations and coordination in the field of outer space activities among organizations within the United Nations system and the avoidance of duplication of activities (A/AC.105/571, para. 39), agreed that the present report should be brought to the attention of the Subcommittee.

35. The participants considered the need for further inter-agency consultation on, and coordination of, the activities and programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly in view of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and the follow-up activities to be undertaken in response to Agenda 21. The participants therefore agreed that the next Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities should be held with the following major items on its provisional agenda:

1. Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
2. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas:
   (a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the actual activities of United Nations organizations in the area of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes;
   (b) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of United Nations organizations.

3. In-depth review of the cooperation of United Nations organizations in remote sensing and related GIS activities: remote sensing data policy for requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system and implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.

4. Inter-agency coordination in matters relating to the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

5. Other matters.

36. The participants agreed that they should continue their in-depth review of cooperation between United Nations organizations in some specific areas of space applications, such as communications, navigation, meteorology and related technology transfer, education, intellectual property and spin-off benefits, in order to ensure that the activities of the United Nations system in those areas were meaningfully integrated and the services rendered to Member States fully met their requirements in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

37. Regarding the schedule of work for its next session, the Meeting noted that, because of changed circumstances, there was no longer a need to implement the agreement, made at its fifteenth session, to hold future sessions in conjunction with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and to apply related transitional arrangements. The Meeting, therefore, agreed that its future sessions should be convened at Vienna, hosted by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, during late September or early October. Such an agreement was without prejudice to any invitation by an interested agency to host a future session at its headquarters.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

38. During the course of the Meeting, a technical presentation on the Global Access to Tele-health and Education Systems (GATES) was made by the representatives of the International Space University (ISU), elaborating on the results of a design project carried out by an international group of graduate students during the 1994 summer session of ISU, held at Barcelona, Spain. The participants raised several issues, which were clarified by the ISU presenters, and the Meeting agreed that it was worthwhile to examine it closer. Accordingly, it was suggested that ISU might wish to submit the design project for comments and consideration of appropriate agencies of the United Nations.

39. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Exhibit on International Cooperation in Utilizing the Benefits of Space Technology for Improving Life on Earth and for Protecting the Environment, which is housed at the United Nations Office at Vienna. It further noted that the work of several organizations within the United Nations system were reflected in the Exhibit. Representatives of several agencies indicated that they would send material for the opening of the second stage of the Exhibit, and others were encouraged to do so.

40. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Chairman as well as to the Office for Outer Space Affairs, acting as host and providing secretariat support for the meetings, which contributed significantly to the strengthening of cooperation within the United Nations system.

Note

[1]Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.1.8), vol. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: V. KOJARNOVITCH (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

Secretary: N. JASENTULIYANA (United Nations)

United Nations

Office for Outer Space Affairs	A. A. Abiodun P. Lála H. Haubold T. Chiku (Assistant Secretary) J. Thaker M. Sanidas
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Changchui He
United Nations Environment Programme	R. J. Arnold

Specialized agencies and other organizations in the United Nations system

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	M. Bied-Charreton
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	R. Missotten
International Civil Aviation Organization	J. D. Chagas
International Telecommunication Union	P. Korobenkov
World Meteorological Organization	D. Hinsman
World Intellectual Property Organization	A. Tramposch D. Gervais
International Atomic Energy Agency	A. J. Gonzalez M. Gustafsson

Other organizations

International Space University (for technical presentation only)	A. Bortollus N. Dettmann A. Donnti C. Durand B. Rossi y Costa G. Supper

Annex II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting.

2. Election of the Chairman of the meeting.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and review of preparations for UNISPACE - III.

5. Implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.

6. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical applications of space technology and related areas:

   (a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the actual activities of United Nations organizations in the area of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes:

      (i) United Nations Space Applications Programmes;
      (ii) Programmes of the other organizations;

   (b) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of United Nations organizations.

7. In-depth review of the cooperation of United Nations organizations in remote sensing and related GIS activities: remote sensing data policy for requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system.

8. Coordination of follow-up activities of the organizations of the United Nations system for International Space Year 1992.

9. Other matters:

   (a) Future meetings;

   (b) Third UNISPACE conference;

   (c) Additional matters.